

## *Molopo Nature Reserve to Mabuasehube August 2013 Trip Report*

Off Road Marshal Unit Members; Noël, Richard – Toyota Prado, Dennis – Toyota Hilux & caravan, Mike, Clara – 79 Cruiser Bakkie & trailer, Chris, Adele – Tdi Discovery 1 & Venter Botswana trailer, Hannes, Ina – 2.5td Ford Ranger, Johan, Wilma – Discovery 3, Des, Sanet – Toyota Prado, and Steve, Annetjie – Toyota Prado & Conqueror Supra trailer, decided to take a break from marshalling and with Noël doing the planning went to Mabuasehube in Botswana for a few days.

### *Day one, 8 August*

Des and Sanet travelled to Lichtenburg on 7 August and joined Johan, Wilma, Ina and me, from where our journey started with a breakfast at the Maxis Diner in Lichtenburg on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August. Just after 8:00 we left for the Molopo Nature Reserve near Vorstershoop via Mafikeng and Bray.

Mike, Clara, Dennis, Steve and Annetjie left on the 9<sup>th</sup> and travelled via Kuruman to the Cullinan Guest Farm. Noël, Richard, Chris and Adele left on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August where we met up with them on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

90 km west of Mafikeng the tar road became gravel and we stopped to deflate tyres.



*90 km outside Mafikeng the tar stopped*

After stopping for a drink at the Tapame Lodge (S25.45909 E23.71596) near Bray, we travelled via Terra Firma to Vorstershoop (S25.83616 E23.02414) where we topped up our fuel and Ina and Wilma had a spin in a Kalahari Ferrari.



*The Kalahari Ferrari at Vorstershoop*

After 400km, we arrived at a cold and windy Molopo Nature Reserve (S25.78152 E22.94231) at around 16:00 and made camp and started preparing the evening meal which consisted of marinated chicken, potato bake potbrood and salads. Just as dinner was ready Koos Hallatt and his wife Anna-marie with their grand daughter arrived. They were planning to visit the Molopo Nature Reserve with their son in law and decided to come a day earlier.

Travel stats:

Distance travelled:	400km
Avg speed:	47km/h
Avg moving:	75km/h
Max speed:	119km/h

### **Day two, 9 August**

Up at about 07:00 we had a leisurely breakfast and watched game from the hide above the waterhole. Giraffe, Eland Kudu, Blue Wildebeest, Warthog and a lone very skinny Impala were seen at the waterhole. Des, Sanet, Ina and I went for a game drive to the vulture restaurant and the southern water hole. A lot of game were seen which included Gemsbok, Red Hartebeest, Blue Wildebeest, Eland and Warthog.

Back at camp Johan was preparing dinner in the form of a delicious mutton potjie wit pap and salads. It was also apparent that a very cold night was awaiting us.

Molopo Game Reserve info:

Wood can be bought at the reception at R1.50/kg. A lesson learned here is that you must check when your wood is weighed. Our 50kg bundle was a hell of a lot smaller than the guy camping not far from us. Also no maintenance and improvements were done at the camp site and ablution blocks in the three years since my last visit.

### **Day three, 10 August**

Waking up early but only getting out of the tent after 08:00, everything was frozen solid, even the cooking oil that was forgotten outside. According to the guys that have the gadgets the minimum temperature was  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Luckily we were prepared for the cold, but getting out of the tent for a call of nature was not a pleasant experience. After packing up we departed at about 12:00 for the Cullinan Guest Farm that was about 95km further west. Travelling along the Botswana Border in the Molopo River was a scenic drive on a road that changed between corrugated gravel to smooth gravel to sand.

Arriving at Cullinan Guest Farm (S26.33884 E22.61443) at 15:45 to find Dennis, Mike, Clara, Steve and Annetjie already there, we were greeted by Bennie and Marda, the friendly owners, we bought wood at R30/bag from Bennie. After the wood was loaded we settled into our room and after a hot bath and shower at the guest house we went down to the camp site for a few drinks with the rest of the group. In the meantime Noël, Richard, Chris and Adelle have also arrived.



*The Rustic Cabin at Cullinan Guest Farm*

At 19:00 we went back to the main house for dinner of delicious Mushroom and biltong soup as a starter followed by springbok pie, green beans, pumpkin and red wine. Desert was lemon cupcakes with ice-cream and cream. At around 21:00 it was off to bed for me.

Travel stats:

Distance travelled: 95km

Avg speed: 13km/h

Avg moving: 49km/h

Max speed: 93km/h

### **Day four, 11 August**

Waking up early again I got out of bed around 06:30 and wandered around the farm, waiting for the others to come alive. Departing at 08:30 for the McCarthy's Rest border post, everything went smooth at both sides of the border. We stopped at Tsabong for a final fuel top up and some last minute shopping before setting off for Mabuasehube. The first part of the dirt road out of Tsabong was very corrugated but further away the corrugations gave way for a smoother drive. About 70km from Tsabong, we stopped to deflate tyres for the sand stretch that lay ahead. We arrived at the gate at around 14:00 and with the formalities quickly dealt with, set off to Monamodi Camp #1 & #2. We all made camp at #2 as #1 had no toilet or shower.



*Mabuasehube Entrance*

After making camp in a vey cold, strong wind and settling in, it was time to start preparing dinner for some of us. Meal turns were divided in to groups, with four vehicles per group. Our group consisted of Des & Sanet, Steve & Annetjie, Johan & Wilma and Ina & me. Sunday night it was everyone for himself and Ina and I settled for a nice beef curry & rice.

Travel stats:

Distance travelled: 167km

Avg speed: 22km/h

Avg moving: 49km/h

Max speed: 89km/h

### **Day five, 12 August**

With some of the guys leaving camp at sparrows fart to go game viewing, I only crawled out of the tent at around 08:00 and made myself a broffie (brandy and coffee), Ina got a normal coffee. Relaxing and chatting with the other lazy (normal?) people, we prepared brunch and only left camp after 12:00 for a drive to Letsholoago Pan. It turned out to be a very nice drive, with lots of game at Letsholoago Pan. We had oysters, cheese and cheese crackers with wine, brandy and whisky for a afternoon snack. We also met a guy that was camping at Mabua pan (can't remember his name) and an impromptu bokdrolospoege competition started.



*Des, the winner of the bokdrolospoege competition*

Back at Monamodi Pan, we took a drive around the pan and joined up with Noël, Richard, Chris and Adelle. Here I saw a first for me. Two Honey Badgers were browsing in the pan with Goshawks following them around.



*Honey Badger*

We arrived back at the camp at around 17:00 and settled around the camp fire while waiting for the delicious Ox tail and mash potatoes with pumpkin that Des and Sanet were preparing. This was round of with a lemon meringue tart.

After dinner we chatted around the fire, listening to the night sounds until everyone was in bed at around 22:00.

Travel stats:

Distance travelled: 50.2km

Avg speed: 10km/h

Avg moving: 19km/h

Max speed: 41km/h

### **Day six, 13 August**

Out of bed at around 07:30 and had some broffies. We left camp around 9:00 and idled to Bosobogola Pan where we had boerewors and krummelpap for brunch. After brunch we idled over to Mpayathutlwa Pan. After watching some vultures and a \_\_\_\_\_ eagle we idled back to camp where Ina and I started preparing the evening meal. On the menu was mince with noodles in white

sauce with cheese. Beetroot salad was available for the vegetarians and warm brown pudding with custard for desert. After consuming too much red wine, it was off to bed.

Travel stats:

Distance travelled: 68.1km

Avg speed: 8km/h

Avg moving: 24km/h

Max speed: 38km/h

### **Day seven, 14 August**

After the previous evening's red wine, I was in no hurry to get up. We had no set plan for the day, so it was not necessary to go somewhere in a hurry. After a moer by brunch Des and I decided to take a piece of pipe to Mike Cliff at Mabua Pan. The pipe connecting the two fuel tanks in his Cruiser broke off. Just as we left the camp, Mike arrived. So instead Des, Steve and I went to the main entrance to find out if there are any camping spots open for another two days as we had to leave on Friday and wanted to stay another day or two. Sadly, all the camps were fully booked. We made use of the facilities at the main gate and had a beer with Mike Cliff and watched him fix his cruiser.



*Mike doing the fixing thing, with Estelle giving moral support.*

Back at the camp we did nothing but relax. At about 16:00 we went to the Letsholoago Pan waterhole for a sundowner. After watching various animals

come for a drink while we were having a drink and watching the sun set over the pan we headed back to the camp where Steve and Annetjie were preparing spare ribs and chips for dinner. Man, did we enjoy those spare ribs.

No travelling stats as I was too lazy to switch on the GPS :-). After all I'm on holiday.

### **Day eight, 15 Augustus**

Up and about at around 07:30 and had two broffies. Ina and I left at around 10:30 for Mpayathutlwa Pan where we chatted with a young couple that was packing up and leaving. They were gatvol of lions in their camp. Apparently we missed the lions by about twenty minutes. The nearest that lions came to our camp, was at the water hole that was about 700m from our camp and not visible from the camp. After a light lunch we returned to our camp via Mabua Pan. At the Monamodi Pan water hole we found a magnificent kudu bull. While watching him drink our resident brown hyena nonchalantly walked up to the water hole and chased the kudu away.



*Our resident brown hyena having a drink. The kudu that was chased away.*

Tonight it was Johan and Wilma's turn to feed us and what a feast we had. Rib eye beef, perfectly prepared to everyone's taste. This was offered with cuscus and bean salad with fruit salad as desert. As this was also our last night and with a lot of wood still available we ended our last night in the bush with a decent fire. Two more bottles of red wine appeared as well as the last of Dennis' chilli OBS. What a great last night in the bush with great friends.



*I think this will keep the Polar Bears at bay :-)*

#### Travel stats:

Distance travelled: 45km

Avg speed: 15km/h

Avg moving: 19km/h

Max speed: 37km/h

#### **Day nine, 16 August**

I could not sleep late, as we had to start packing for our journey back to SA. The group of eight vehicles will be splitting again with Noël, Richard, Dennis, Mike, Clara, Johan en Wilma going back through Botswana via Juaneng, Lobatse and Zeerust. Des, Sanet, Steve, Annetjie, Ina and I are going back via Kuruman and staying over at Red Sands near Kuruman. Chris and Adelle will join us up to Tsabong where they will turn off to Boksputs on their way to Springbok and further south, where they intend to spend some time watching flowers.

Noël and his packet left at 08:00, while the rest of us left at 09:30. Check out at the gate went without a problem and after making use of the facilities we were up and running by 10:00. About 30km from the main gate, on the way to Tsabong, I saw a huge male leopard in the road. We stopped where he left the road, but could not see it. From here on we had an uneventful trip up to

Tsabong where Chris and Adelle turned off. The border crossing went without a hitch and we were in Kuruman by 16:00. At Red Sands we checked in, in chalets and had a super last evening braai.

Travel stats:

Distance travelled: 349km  
Avg speed: 43km/h  
Avg moving: 75km/h  
Max speed: 135km/h

### **Day ten, 17 August**

After a cosy night in a warm chalet, we were ready for breakfast at 09:00 and on the road at 10:00. After a stop at the Kuruman eye we were mobile again at 11:00. We did good time to Vryburg, catching all but one of the stop and go at the right time. At Biesiesvlei we kept straight on to Lichtenburg and Des, Sanet, Steve and Annetjie turned off to Coligny and JHB. I arrived home at 15:00 and was unpacked in time for the rugby at 17:00.



*Annetjie, Steve & Des at Kuruman Eye*

Travel stats:

Distance travelled: 342km  
Avg speed: 57km/h

Avg moving: 90km/h

Max speed: 129km/h

#### More Stats:

Total distance travelled: 1661 km of which only 641 km was on tar roads.

Litres diesel used: 302.82ℓ

Fuel consumption for the total distance: 5.6 km/l.

More photos at:

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/hannes\\_v\\_rensburg/sets/72157635118896931/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/hannes_v_rensburg/sets/72157635118896931/)